

Strategic Extractive Resources Areas (SERA) Pilot Project, Wyndham

1. Need for big picture & long term planning

We are invited to respond to an important single issue without knowing the long term strategic land use planning that DELWP or either of our Councils have in mind for the Little River District or the You Yangs Region as a whole. We urgently need the guidance of:

- (i) Avalon Corridor Land Use Study – intended to determine the balance between current land uses & future transport, development & defence priorities for the Corridor. The Study has been missing in action since 2016.
- (ii) Western Plains South Green Wedge Management Plan – this is also stalled. Community, Council & DELWP affirmation of this once long-term plan would give the farming community, developers & other land owners needed certainty.

2. Not all quarries are the same

On environmental grounds, we strongly oppose coal & coal seam gas extraction in general & any extension of the unsustainable granite & sand mining in the You Yangs. We are not opposed to well managed quarrying in Green Wedge & Farming Zones as long as this includes rigorous compliance monitoring.

Cuttings & quarries on the Werribee Plains have been part of our working landscape since the 1860s & have contributed to the Victorian, Wyndham & Geelong economies & to local employment. We understand that the basalt quarries have been well tolerated in this farming community in the past. Their proximity to Bulban Road & the Princes Highway has avoided the road dangers encountered with quarry trucks in the You Yangs precinct. It may be, however, that the recent growth of a more suburban Town Zone & Rural Life Style type of development in the Little River district is starting to test this tolerance.

3. An opportunity for community feedback

The SERA Pilot provides an opportunity to provide community feedback on the trial introduction of stronger planning controls for the quarrying industry. Feedback will focus on:

- (i) protection of existing & identified future quarries in Wyndham from inappropriate adjacent land use;
- (ii) potential impact of quarries on adjacent public and private land, waterways, heritage & public amenity;
- (iii) quarry management practices, including compliance with buffer, environmental & traffic requirements;
- (iv) eventual rehabilitation & revegetation to appropriate environmental standards.

4. An opportunity to pro-actively negotiate environmental benefits...

This consultation provides an opening for the Little River Community Landcare Group & other environmental advocacy groups to develop a working relationship with DELWP (Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning), DJPR (Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions) & the City of Wyndham through our participation as local stakeholders in the SERA Pilot Project.

The Western Grasslands Reserve – this future nationally significant reservation is way behind schedule & will need community, government & perhaps corporate affirmation if it is to achieve its potential. As an immediate neighbour of the proposed SERA / State Resource Overlay in Little River ... & with two pre-existing quarry sites within its borders ... the Western Grassland Reserve is an example of an environmental project that could, with careful planning & safeguards, become a significant beneficiary of the SERA pilot & the government attention involved.

The elephants (still) in the room ...

There are a number of major planning issues which will impact on our landscape in the future. Of these, the five most pressing are ...

- ✦ Avalon Corridor Land Use Strategy (DELWP, Wyndham & CoGG) ... the largest of the elephants ... this project will focus on the balance between current land uses & priorities, & the future transport, development & defence priorities for the Corridor. It has not reported progress since December 2016.
<https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/planning/article/item/8d3fc42e56580fa.aspx>
- ✦ Western Plains South Green Wedge Report, 2018 (Wyndham) ... which recommends a GWZ Management Plan for Little River's Green Wedge Zone. <https://theloop.wyndham.vic.gov.au/western-plains>
- ✦ City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, 2018 (CoGG) ... this report & the current Amendment C395 discuss the contested need for a permanent boundary to Geelong's urban growth.
<https://geelongaustralia.com.au/strategicplanning/documents/item/8d5b438a9620da8.aspx>
- ✦ Protecting & Supporting Melbourne's Strategic Agricultural Land – Engagement Findings Report, 2019 ... although more strongly oriented to horticulture & viticulture than Little River & Quandong's dry-land grain, wool & meat production, this report considers agricultural land within 100 km of Melbourne. <https://engage.vic.gov.au/gwal>
- ✦ Strategic Extractive Resource Area Pilot Project, 2020 (Wyndham) ... focusses on present & future quarrying in the Little River & Quandong Rural Districts of Wyndham. <https://engage.vic.gov.au/sera-pilot-project>

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